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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 001258

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STATE PASS IO/UNP SUN, EUR/PGI ELDRIDGE, AND EUR/WE MARCUS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [BE](#)

SUBJECT: BELGIUM: RESPONSE TO UNGA 64 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

REF: STATE 90254

Classified By: POL/ECON Chief Richard Eason for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

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¶1. (U) PolEconOff and PolEconIntern met September 16 with Future MFA DG for UN Relations Marie Louise Vanherk to discuss reftel UNGA Priorities. Vanherk welcomed the information and provided a preview of the expected Belgian priorities as well as remarks on U.S. priorities.

Belgian Priorities  
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¶2. (C) Vanherk provided a list of Belgium's UNGA 64 priorities from a recent internal discussion. She said these topics would soon be shared with parliament:

-- Commitment to Multiculturalism: Belgium is concerned about cultural relativism and its questioning of universal values. Belgium is now skeptical of the Dialogue of Civilizations, viewing it as a possible vehicle to promote segregated regional rather than universal values.

-- Nonproliferation: Belgium is looking forward to the event on nuclear disarmament.

-- Responsibility of States to Protect Civilians in Humanitarian Situations: Belgium believes a gradual approach to humanitarian intervention should be followed. Sovereign states should exercise their responsibility to protect their own people first, followed by assistance from third countries and organizations if states cannot meet their responsibilities. Outside humanitarian intervention under Article 7 of the UN Charter should be an option only if the first two conditions are not met.

-- Commitment to the Peacebuilding Commission: Belgium thinks the coming 2010 review of this body is a good initiative, and supports the Commissions continuation. Belgium will chair the upcoming report on the Central African Republic.

-- Responding to the Financial Crisis: The GOB supports the G20 process but hopes global financial and economic issues can be discussed in the UN as well.

-- Budget Control: Vanherk said the Belgian government was going through budget tightening exercises; Belgium will therefore be critical of expansions in the UN budget. The GOB will insist on proper audits and try to obtain representation on UN budgetary boards. She said that the Cour de Comptes, a parliamentary budget office, asked the MFA to justify the need for any increases in Belgian outlays to the UN this year.

## Response to U.S. Priorities

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13. (C) Vanherk provided the following commentary on U.S. UNGA 64 priorities:

-- Peacekeeping and Conflict Management: Vanherk said the UN plays an important role. Belgium supports the Department of Mediation, Department of Political Affairs, and thinks the UN should start stressing more conflict prevention over peacekeeping. The GOB will ask for concrete initiatives for police; disarmament, demobilization, and reconstruction (DDR); and security sector reform (SSR). Belgium also seeks peace mission reform, and believes UN missions have reached their limits in terms of both the number of troops and mandates. She also said that the UN needs to achieve a quicker transition between conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction and cooperate better with regional organizations (like the AU and NATO). Belgium does believe however that protection of humanitarian aid workers, women, and children should be emphasized in mandates.

-- Expanding Economic Growth and Opportunity and Promoting Development: Vanherk said Belgium would make food security and global health a priority during its EU presidency the latter half of 2010.

-- UN Budget: She pointed out that the EU pays approximately 40 percent of the UN budget but represents only 30 percent of world GDP.

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## Belgium's Schedule

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14. (C) Vanherk said FM Letermé would be meeting with two Jewish organizations including B'nai B'rith while in New York. He will also meet the foreign ministers of Egypt and Brazil and the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference. She said the Chairman of the Human Rights Council, Belgian Alex Van Meeuwen, would be present during UNGA.

## Candidacy for UNGA 65 Presidency

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15. (C) Vanherk closed by noting that Belgium had said it would name a candidate for President of the 65th General Assembly but had not yet chosen a name. In the meantime she said the Swiss had already named a candidate in former FM Joseph Deiss.

GUTMAN

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